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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Mosquitoes in Wellesley Test Positive for West Nile Virus**

September 2, 2021 (Wellesley, MA) – The Wellesley Health Department received word today that mosquito samples in our community have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV), a mosquito-carried illness. Insects in some neighboring communities have also tested positive, raising the risk of human infection for the virus to the [moderate level](#) in our area. On September 1, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) reported the first confirmed human case of West Nile virus in Massachusetts this year. Two more human cases in the state were confirmed by MDPH today.

West Nile virus is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. While many infected people will have no symptoms or experience mild flu-like symptoms, people over the age of 50 are at a higher risk for severe disease. The substantial amount of rain this summer and hot weather have resulted in an increase in the population of the Culex species of mosquitoes, which are known to spread West Nile virus and breed in places where standing water accumulates.

Wellesley does not regularly spray for mosquitoes. In light of the positive test samples, MDPH and the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Commission to which Wellesley belongs, will add additional surveillance activities and larvicide applications in our community and all other moderate level communities.

Protect Yourself from Mosquito Bites

The Health Department is encouraging all residents to take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

- Apply insect repellent when outdoors. (Repellent with an EPA registered ingredient like DEET is recommended; please use according to instructions on the package).
- Avoid outdoor activities during the peak mosquito hours of dusk to dawn.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors to keep mosquitoes away from skin.
- Drain standing water around homes, in gutters and downspouts, and in unused flowerpots, wading pools, birdbaths, and other containers where water collects.
- Install or repair screens on windows and doors to prevent mosquitoes from coming indoors.

According to Health Department Director Lenny Izzo, cooler weather will also help control mosquito activity. “These positive samples are coming later in the mosquito season. Residents do need to take precautions but we hope that with Fall right around the corner, our temperatures will drop and mosquito activity will naturally decrease in the coming weeks,” he said.

Health officials have compiled a list of [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) about mosquito-carried illnesses and prevention activities. Additional information is also available on the [Health Department webpages](#).

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